



Graduate School of Development Studies

## **The Politics of 'Pastoralist Vulnerability**

**An intersectional perspective**

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## List of Acronyms

BoA	Bureau of Agriculture
DPFSB	Disaster Preparedness and Food Security Bureau
EFSRA	Emergency Food Security Reserve Administration
GOs	Government Organisations
HCS	Hararghe Catholic Secretariat
IPAS	Institute of Pastoral and Agro-pastoral Studies
MoFA	Ministry of Federal Affairs
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
PASC	Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee
PCDP	Pastoral Community Development Project
PFE	Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia
SC-UK	Save the Children–United Kingdom
SNRS	Somali National Regional States
SZAO	Shinile Zone Administration Office
WAO	Women’s Affairs Office
CISP	Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (International Committee for the Development of Peoples)

## **Abstract**

The persistent of vulnerability of Ethiopian pastoralists' to drought and conflict has attracted a number of state and non-state development actors. Though vast relief efforts are underway, the vulnerability of the people still persists. Perspectives on pastoralists' vulnerability have been polarized between the two epistemological stances, foundationalist vis-à-vis anti-foundationalist, adopted by the government and PFE respectively with inconsistent stands when it comes to policy visions and implementation. There is limited attempt on both sides to understand pastoralism and pastoralists in plural terms. As a result, neither of the perspectives makes an effort to adequately address the complex factors that caused pastoralists vulnerability, nor does their prescribed solution address the lived experiences of the people under a strained mode of life. In this paper, I argue that the persistence of pastoralists' vulnerability is due to lack of appropriate response rooted in lack of understanding of the interplay between social, political, economic and environmental forces within and outside the mode of life that caused vulnerability. The efforts to reducing pastoralists vulnerability and to alleviate their burdens requires finding a common platform for action to built an understanding of complexity from a situated perspective with concern for context, perceptions and action of marginalized sub-groups within pastoralists communities, namely the women and minority clans who have an epistemic privilege to see and understand more objectively the dynamics within and outside the mode of life that affect them directly.

Keywords: Pastoralism, Pastoralists, Gender, Clan, Intersectional vulnerability, Epistemology, Shinile, Government, PFE



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Statement of the research problem

Pastoralism prevails in many parts of the world and bear different identities, such as the Aromanians of the Balkans, the Sarakatsani of Greece, the Yörük of Turkey, the Bedouin of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the Maasai and Somali of Africa, the Dhangars of India, the Kuchis of Afghanistan, the Tuvans of Mongolia, and the Navajo of North America.<sup>1</sup> Scholars view Pastoralism as a mode of life arising from the need for adaptation to the natural environment. Depending on geographical zones and environmental context, the forms of pastoralism may differ. In some contexts, pastoralism evolved as a response to massive intensification of farming that reduced the amount of land available for grazing for livestock. Long-distance mobility became an option to have sufficient diet for livestock. In other contexts, it arose directly followed hunting-gathering as a mode of life (Lees and Bates 1974: 188-190). Pastoralism could also be understood as a livelihood strategy in response to harsh environmental and climate conditions (*ibid.*, Abdulahi 2003: 39).

In Ethiopia, the pastoralist population constitutes about 10 to 12 % of a total of 80 million (Gebre citing Fekadu 2001: 62, Kassa et al. citing Ahmed, 2005:186) or nearly 9.6 million. They owned and managed 26% to 42% of the total livestock population (Mikrie citing Getachew 2005:2, PFE 2006:3) and occupy between 50% (Gebre 2001:62, PFE 2006:3) and 61% of the country's total land mass of 1,119,683 square kilometres, or nearly 683,006 square kilometres. The pastoralist population is geographically distributed along the peripheral territory in the lowlands of the country.

Persisted for hundreds of years satisfying the need of people facing 'difficult biophysical environment' (Gebre 2001:1), pastoralist livelihood

systems consists of diverse activities including agro-pastoralism, trading, collection of non-timber forest products such as incense and gum, mining, hunting and gathering, petty trading, and urban based pastoralism (Beyene 2008: 8, Field note, interview PFE, 15 July 2008). Seasonal mobility (both within and cross boarder) in search for resources (pasture and water for grazing in moist area) is the central element of the mode of life.

Ethiopian pastoralists suffered from a history of repeated drought for nearly one century which has undermined their livelihoods in particular ways. In the lowlands of Ethiopia where they live, the climatic conditions have worsened and the productivity of the land is deteriorating, leading to conflict over resources. Conflicts however are also due to the very nature of the mode of life. The ‘scarcity-driven’ mobility in search for moist areas still prevails in condition where the land area endowed with such conditions is shrinking due to climate change and its intensification by local practices. The competition for access to shrinking resources has resulted in conflicts (Beyene 2008: 107), that in severe cases have turned into armed conflicts among the pastoralist population (Abdulahi citing Kassa 2003: 54). As pastoralist mobility cuts across national boundaries, the lack of peace and security within and between Ethiopia’s neighbouring countries also affects pastoralist modalities of conflict resolution.

The general tendency among policy-makers to view the pastoralist mode of life as a ‘backward’ and ‘wild’ way of life (Abdulahi 2003: 40) that needs to be changed offers no avenue to understand the complexity of their vulnerability in order to find solutions more appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

Pastoralist social organization is central to their livelihood system and is primarily based on clan and kinship relations (Hussein 2008: 48). Within the clan system, a hierarchy of majority and minority clan exists. Gender hierarchy cross-cuts the class system. In combination the two hierarchical systems operate in ways that women and minority clans are excluded from access to

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<sup>1</sup>Source, Encyclopaedia Britannica: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/446108/pastoralism>

and control over communal and familial resources. The experiences of vulnerability to drought and conflict among pastoralist vary according to the position an individual or a group occupies in the gender and clan relations. Yet the gender and clan dimensions of pastoralist vulnerability remain invisible to policy-making bodies. They neither see the gender and clan based differentiation nor they treat the category ‘pastoralists’ and ‘women’ in heterogeneous way in policy rhetoric and plans of action.

The Ethiopian Women Policy<sup>2</sup> designed to addresses women’s concerns does not give a space to understand differences among women. Under the policy for example the Bureau of Agriculture is given the responsibility to (a) introduce extension service in activities which are closely related to women such as vegetable and milk production, poultry, etc., (b) encourage women head families to participate in every program, and (c) assist women in getting credit and inputs and extension services. The Commission for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness is given the responsibility to (a) [design food for] work programs through which Female victims (with no land and means of production) can have a sustainable support (b) give priority to women and children, and (c) create a gender sensitive appraisal system for NGO projects. Generally, these policy directives see ‘women’ as a category and pay attention only to women in sedentary agricultural production systems. The experience of women pastoralists and women pastoralists from a minority clan are not given adequate attention under the policy.

The viability of pastoralism as a mode of life and the impact on adaptive behaviour among pastoralists cannot be understood exclusively through an ecology-centred framework. Their vulnerability needs to be understood both from the perspective of the forces external to the mode of life and from those arising from internal dynamics of differentiation. The lens of intersectional vulnerability can explain (a) how different processes (climate change, repeated drought and conflict) have converged and made the mode of life more

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Date accessed: 5 October 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Ethiopian National Action Plan, Women Watch. Available online: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/beijing/national/ethiopia.htm>. Date accessed: 7 November 2008.

precarious, and (b) how different social orders and structures intersect with one another in ways that made the livelihoods of women and minority clans specifically more vulnerable. Such an understanding may contribute to policy measures that are sensitive to the contextual aspects of the vulnerability of pastoralism as a mode of life, and the vulnerability of specific social groups within the pastoralist population.

## **1.2 Relevance and aim of the research**

Research on pastoralism in Ethiopia has so far examined some aspects of the intersections that brought about pastoralists vulnerability. Piecemeal works exist on issues of marginalisation, customary institution and resource governance, conflict, drought and famine, natural resource management, etc. Understanding about the intersection between long-term ecological and socio-political processes and the impact of social orders is scant.

Recent efforts to recognize pastoralism as viable mode of life by Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE) contributed to constitutional and institutional reforms by the Ethiopian government. However, both the government and PFE's discourses on diagnosing pastoralists' vulnerability and prescribing solutions tend to homogenize the experience of pastoralists. Their plural experiences thus are not recognised. Neither of the discourses includes the perspective of women and minorities. A gender analysis of vulnerability can be helpful to situate particular aspects of vulnerability at different points of intersection between gender, clan and other socially constructed identities.

This research focuses on how pastoralist people live and maintain their existence under the condition of repeated drought and conflict from the standpoint of women and minority clans. It shows how the meanings of vulnerability from the standpoint of being a woman and a member of a minority clan and how the intersection between different dimensions of vulnerability remain invisible to the government and PFE, or at least not given adequate attention.

In this vein, the research aims to:

1. To bring an understanding of intersection between different forms of ‘vulnerability’ that occurs in culturally and environmentally-related processes of marginalization causing pastoralist vulnerability; and
2. To contribute to the broader debates on the gender and clan dynamics in pastoralism as a mode of life.

In doing so, it aims to identify key areas for further research and debate on pastoralists’ vulnerability that contributes to the intellectual work of the Institute of Pastoral and Ago-pastoral Studies (IPAS), of which I am a member. In trying to bridge the gap in previous researches, the paper provides a broader understanding of a reality that is close to the way people exist and cope with the phenomena of drought. The research also seeks to contribute to the policy debate in Ethiopia in a constructive way.

### **1.3 Research methodology and techniques**

Research on gender analysis of poverty and vulnerability shows the need to recognize complexity and the importance of context in order to counterbalance dominant views and develop an appropriate strategy (Alkire cited in Laderchi et al. 2003: 254). This research draws on feminist epistemological insights to develop an understanding of pastoralism as a field of knowledge and practice shaped by pastoralist communities as well as other actors with concern over the viability of this mode of life and the wellbeing of its people.

The research locates the views held by (a) the government and (b) those held by PFE’ on framing and prescribing solution to vulnerability of pastoralist and pastoralism in oppositional stand in the spectrum of epistemological positions.<sup>3</sup> The government stands on positivist position where as the PFE stands on an anti-positivist (social constructivist) position. The government

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<sup>3</sup> Spectrum of epistemology is borrowed as used by Wendy Olsen’s work on Feminist Epistemological Arguments. According to which, Foundationalist belongs to the positivism or empiricism school of thought that believes in the neutrality and objectivity of knowledge and argues that knowledge is a value-free exercise that can be generated through observation, experimentation, reasoning, and experience. Anti-foundationalist belongs to the post-modernism school of thought that argues that ‘everything’ is a social and cultural construct and emphasises on knowledge as a value-laden exercise with diverse meanings and interpretations because of the socially situated knower. (Source: Olsen, W., *Feminist Epistemological Arguments*, University of Bradford)

associates pastoralists' vulnerability with their mobility as a single cause, using the rationales of administration and economic efficiency, security, and proportionality of people to land and resources to legitimize its stand on sedentarization as the logical solution. In contrast PFE sees pastoralists' vulnerability as an outcome of the social construct of the mode of life adopted by the government, using demeaning terms and undermining its value by classifying it as 'backward'. It argues that just as pastoralism as a mode of life has been placed in a lower position in the hierarchy of ideas about the 'development', so too are pastoralists marginalized politically, socially, and economically. Recognition of the meanings of the mode of life is thus crucial for the lives of its people (PFE website). Two perspectives fail to understand the social relations of power within the mode of life that created heterogeneity of experience among pastoralists.

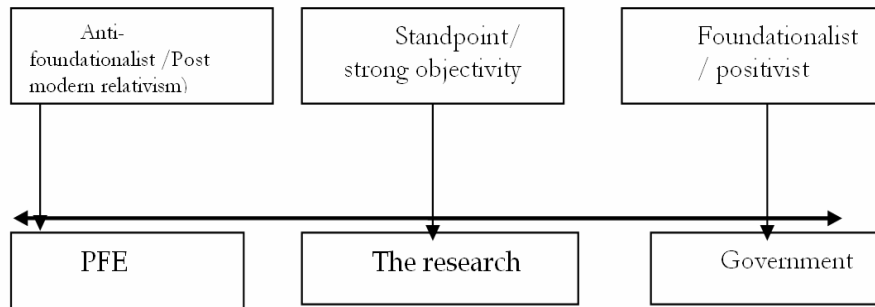
To counterbalance the extreme epistemological stances and to address the failures by the government and PFE, this research is situated at the mid point of the spectrum, and adopts the stand point/strong objectivity position. This position has an element of analysis borrowed from both foundationalist and anti- foundationalist schools of thoughts, but also has a viewpoint regarding who can produce a more objective knowledge. Strong objectivity in feminist standpoint theory is gravitated towards anti-foundationalist principles. This is because it considers the 'situated-ness of knowledge' as significant. In other words, it claims that the knower is socially situated and her/his way of thinking and understanding is shaped by her/his social identity and position (Harding 1986: 27). Extending this position to the 'view of the marginalized groups', standpoint theories argues that they have 'the epistemic privilege' to give an alternative view point which cannot be captured by those who remain in dominant positions.<sup>4</sup> Understanding of a reality from this social position therefore gives a 'more objective, more complete, and less partial' view of

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<sup>4</sup> 'Epistemic privilege' however gained through consciousness. In chapter 2, I referred Lorber arguing men and women do gender without realizing it. In chapter four, I presented women accepting their subordinate position as their cultural obligation and not conscious about their condition except the woman from the WAO. One can ask: what is so special about an epistemic privilege if people don't realize what they do? My response here is epistemic privilege is a function of consciousness. The

reality, in Harding terms a ‘strong objectivity’ (Harding 2005:222, Harding and Wood<sup>5</sup>, Olsen<sup>6</sup>). Taking a standpoint in research is not about being but situating self and starting to think consciously from the position of those who are marginalized from the conventional thinking. Such a position will provide a deeper understanding. It also reveals the complexity of reality that otherwise could be overlooked.

**Figure 1. Spectrum of Epistemology**



*Source: Own illustration based on Olsen, W. Spectrum of Epistemology*

I position myself as a conscious researcher who tries to stand on the same plane as the marginalized sub-groups within pastoralism, the women and minority clans. I took this position to fully appreciate and understand the complexity of their experience. I believe that this position will further allow me to bring a more objective view of experience of vulnerability at the nexus of social, economic, and political forces. Such a perspective can be helpful to counterbalance the polarized positions adopted by government and PFE. Though my analysis cannot speak for all women and minority clan among the Ethiopia pastoralists, it is possible to clarify the meaning of ‘strong objectivity’ as something to be gained from the way I situate my research and the methodology I adopt towards my research subjects as one inspired by solidarity and aspiring for ‘objectivity’ at the same time.

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alternative point of view, which is more objective, comes when people are aware about the socio-cultural and political dynamics that shape their experience.

<sup>5</sup> Harding, S. and Wood, J. Available online: <http://www.afirstlook.com/manual6/ed6man34.pdf>, Date accessed: 27 December 2007)

<sup>6</sup> Olsen, W., Feminist Epistemological Arguments, (Module 3, Unit 7), University of Bradford: Available online: <http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/staff/wkolsen/unit%207.pdf>, Date accessed: 25 October 2008.

The field work began with the idea that, contrary to the claims made by some scholars, neither an ecological-centred explanation nor a polarized dichotomization between highlanders<sup>7</sup> and lowlanders thinking can fully explain the persistence of pastoralists' vulnerability to drought and conflict (Abdulahi 2003: 40). Instead, gains can be made by approaching this vulnerability as a complex interaction between ecological and socio-political processes that produced diverse and interlinked forms of vulnerability.

The research was guided by the questions:

1. What factors caused vulnerability of pastoralists? What main features of pastoralism as a mode of life and social organisation have been affected by recursive drought and conflict? How do aspects of internal power structures (clan, kinship, gender) get reproduced in adaptive mechanisms?
2. In what ways can knowledge about the experience of vulnerability among the weakest members of pastoralist communities (women and minority clans) contribute to a more differentiated understanding of vulnerability?
3. How can such an understanding contribute to new ways of negotiating over the meanings of pastoralist vulnerability?

The concept *intersectional vulnerability*<sup>8</sup> was used as a tool to record interactions between political, social, economic and ecological forces and their impact on the experience of vulnerability of pastoralists in general and differences of experience among pastoralist subgroups in particular.

The choice of the research location, Shinile Woreda<sup>9</sup>, was made on the basis of its epistemological significance. The Woreda is under the Shinile Zone in SNRS in Ethiopia. This zone is known to be the poorest Zone in Somali

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<sup>7</sup> I used the word highlander as used by other authors. Highlanders are mainly those who came from the central Ethiopia- predominantly crop producing areas. Highlanders way of thinking is used to refer to the thinking that essentialise sedentary crop production as oppose to the mobile pastoralism (Abdulahi, 2003: 40).

<sup>8</sup> More about intersectionality and intersectional vulnerability will be discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>9</sup> According to the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic administrative hierarchy, the regional states are divided into Zones, Woredas (districts) and Kebeles in that order. (Kassa *et. al.* 2005)



National Regional State (SNRS) (Devereux 2006: 11; 35). Shinile pastoralists<sup>10</sup> were seriously affected by the 2007/2008 drought and the food crises. Practical matters also played a role. Proximity of the location made the field work more feasible given the short period of time for data collection (July-August, 2008).

Contact to the Shinile Woreda Bureau of Agriculture (BoA) was made through IPAS. Links to translators (the local language is Somali) were made through BOA. Being exploratory, the research uses a combination of techniques. Text analysis was conducted to unearth underlying assumptions about pastoralists' vulnerability held by the government and the rationale behind its intervention. The same method was adopted to analyze the counter position adopted by PFE. PFE was selected for the fact that it is an umbrella NGO consisting over 23 member NGOs of pastoralist concern. PFE claims that it 'voices the collective concern of those NGOs' and that of pastoralists. The documents used for text analysis include the Ethiopian constitution, the 2002 Ethiopian Poverty Reduction Paper (PRSP), PFE website, and PFE's pastoral policy recommendation documents.

Primary data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 10 pastoralist households with a guiding questions developed along the concept of intersectional vulnerability (See Annex). The households were purposively selected: 5 polygamous, 2 monogamous, and 3 female headed (2 divorcees and 1 widowed). The purpose of the interview was to trace through people's lived experience (a) their view of the causes of drought, (b) the differences in experiencing vulnerability due to unequal social relations, and the institutional arrangements that support the unequal social relations, and (c) social practices of coping. Spontaneously, some of the interviews were turned into focus group discussions as more people joined in the discussion. The sensitivity of the research topic, vulnerability to drought, to their existence perhaps made some people interested in the topic and make use of the discussion to build a collective voice.

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<sup>10</sup> 'Pastoralists' is used in the research to refer to mobile pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, non timber forest product collectors...etc. this is because of the difficulty to make demarcation between the diverse livelihood strategies they pursue.

To gain a balanced view local offices and NGOs were also interviewed. Five Shinile Woreda offices: the Shinile Zone Administration Office (SZAO), Shinile Woreda Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP), Women's Affairs Office (WAO), Emergency Food Security Reserve Administration (EFSRA), and Disaster Preparedness and Food Security Bureau (DPFSB), and three local NGOs: Hararghe Catholic Secretariat (HCS), Save the Children–United Kingdom (SC-UK), and Handicap International were interviewed.

Semi-structured interview was also conducted with four national NGOs, PFE, CARE Ethiopia, FARM Africa, and Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP); one research institution IPAS; and one government office—the national PCDP office under the Ministry of Federal Affairs (MoFA). The plan during the design phase of the research was to have focus group discussion with the organizations listed. But the FGD was cancelled after date and venue of the meeting was set due to unforeseen circumstances. Thus, it was replaced with interviews with individual organizations. The interviews were meant to understand their perspective of vulnerability of pastoralists, the solutions they suggests, and their view of government's intervention and commitment.

#### **1.4 Limitations**

Demonstrating the complex interaction between ecological and socio-political processes and their impact on social orders and organizations that brought about pastoralists' vulnerability implies that the paper will not provide a 'one size fit all' recommendation. Instead, it offers context specific explanation built on a situated understanding of these interactions from the perspective of particular groups. During the fieldwork, it was easier for me to grasp the socio-cultural–economic-political dynamics than to differentiate between emotions expressed by my research subjects and their conditions of destitution. Some of my interviewees were exaggerating their experience expecting support while others were less cooperative as the research has no material value for them. The research tries to balance the information through cross-checking and discussing with local offices.

## **1.5 Structure of the paper**

This paper is organized in six chapters. The first chapter introduces the themes of the research. The second chapter provides the conceptual definitions and theoretical approach used in the paper. Chapter three offers the multi-casual and intersectional analysis of pastoralist vulnerability using the concept structural intersectional vulnerability. The case study, Shinile Woreda -a predominantly agro-pastoralist community, will be presented in Chapter four. Chapter five discusses contrasting perspectives between the government and PFE on pastoralist vulnerability and their underlying logics. The last chapter concludes the discussions in previous chapters.

## Chapter 2

# Conceptualising Poverty, Gender, and Intersectional Vulnerability

The last three decades have witnessed progresses in the conceptualisation and measurement of poverty from ‘poverty as analytical category’ to ‘poverty as a normative concept’, from income per se to measures which account power relations and quality of living, and from poverty as ‘a state of affairs’ to poverty as a dynamic phenomenon. This chapter discusses the conceptual links between poverty, disaster, vulnerability, and gender. First, it introduces the concepts introduced in the poverty debate in opposition to the conventional money metric approach. Second, it presents the interplay between poverty, vulnerability, and disaster. Third, the link between poverty and gender is discussed. Fourth, intersectionality and intersectional vulnerability as analytical concepts are introduced. And finally, benchmarks for vulnerability used in the research are presented.

### 2.1 Defining poverty: shifting lenses and making senses of complexities

The conventional money metric, also called income-based, monetary, or uni-dimensional approach to poverty is still the most widely used approach to define and measure poverty (Wagle 2002: 156). Poverty, according to this approach is a ‘short fall of income or consumption from some poverty line’ that is defined internationally or nationally (Laderchi et al. 2003:247). This approach gives more emphasis to household income, consumption, and material welfare. Its assumption is that households are unitary entities with members having similar tastes and preferences. Resource allocation in the household is therefore presumed fairly done according to the interest of members of the household (Agarwal 1997: 2).

Debates on poverty in the 1980s and 1990s led to criticism of the conventional approach. Some of the points of criticisms includes its ignorance of human welfare while essentializing material welfare, its paternalistic and

technocratic approach that focus on expenditure as oppose to distribution, its emphasis on economic category as oppose other aspects 'quality of living' such as security, capability, and social integration, and its lack of sensitivity to institutional factors that govern one's access to and control over resources while emphasizing individual agency (Laderchi et al. 2003: 252, Wagle 2002: 156).

Other set of criticisms of this approach focus on its practicality. For example, Laderchi et al. (2003: 248) points to its inability to measure the 'extent of shortfall of incomes of the poor from the poverty line' or the distribution of the poor below the poverty line and the difficulty to make cross country comparisons due to different standard of living. Most importantly, Bernstein (1992:22), Fukuda-Parr (2002:5), and Sen (1981:11) point to its ignorance of non-monetary and subsistence earning that other wise would have an important contribution in human wellbeing. In rural pastoralist livelihood for example subsistence agriculture is a common livelihood activity that cannot be fully captured by the money-metric approach.

The debates bring about new ways of seeing, locating, assessing, understanding, and responding to poverty (Laderchi et al. 2003: 269). The introduction of the concepts such as entitlement and capability failures by Amartya Sen; and vulnerability, deprivation, and social exclusion by Robert Chambers have brought new perspectives on poverty as a dynamic, multi-dimensional, relational and gendered phenomenon (Frazer 2005: 371, Razavi 1999, Wagle 2002). The different ways of understanding and conceptualizing in one way or another reinforce each other. A socially excluded individual or a group will be denied from local system of entitlements because of their identity that brought about their exclusion. This in turn deprives them from getting services available in that community and thus constrains their capability. Less capability also means less opportunity. Such group becomes more vulnerable to become poor as a result.

## **2.2 The poverty, vulnerability, and disaster nexus**

The vulnerability concept in poverty studies contributed to an understanding of the contextual, dynamic and complex nature of poverty. Vulnerability is

defined as ‘the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural [or a man made] hazard’ (Frerks 2008: 3). It is also a sentiment where individuals or a group feel a sense of ‘defencelessness’, ‘insecurity’, ‘exposure to risk, shocks and stress’ due to being prone to poverty or hazard. These are internal aspect of individuals or a group’s vulnerabilities. The vulnerability approach to poverty therefore looks into uncertainties that are created in political, social, economic, and ecological systems that make an individual or a group feel insecure to some external processes. Vulnerability thus is a theory that connects ‘environment and disaster, economy and ‘human systems’, and development and poverty’ (Benson 2004:166, Frerks and Bender 2004: 194-195, Heijmans 2004: 124).

The complex nature of poverty is due to multi-layered interactions between phenomenon, processes and social orders at a given place in specific period of time that results in multiple forms of vulnerability and experiences. Multiple experiences arise from socially constructed identities such as gender, class, race, sexual orientation, or parenthood imposed on persons with expectations about responsibilities and entitlements, which may differ according to contexts (Hilhorst and Bankoff 2004:6, Winser 2004:190). Interacting factors produce dynamic experiences. Changes in social, economic, environmental and developmental conditions can change the way poverty is experienced over time (Frerks 2008: 2, 7).

In an attempt to connect poverty with disaster studies, scholars have challenged the dominant view on disaster as a natural phenomena caused by external factors (Kassa et al. 2005: 185). They argue for a shift towards a more sociologically oriented interpretation of disaster, and define it as ‘a product of hazard and vulnerability’ (Bankoff 2004:29, Frerks and Bender 2004: 195, Frerks citing Alexander 2008: 3, Winser 2004:183). Where hazard is considered an outcome of natural phenomena, vulnerability is a complex social, political, environmental, institutional, developmental and economic process (Bankoff 2004:29, Cardona 2004:40, Frerks 2008: 3-8, Heijmans, 2004:116). In pastoralists context for example pastoralists’ experience of famine is a disaster. Famine however not only stems from changing climatic conditions that

brought limited to no rainfall, but also from systemic failures in economic, social, political, and environmental domains to respond to those made vulnerable by climatic conditions. While failure of rainfall could be considered a hazard, the failures that arose from the set of interactions in the socioeconomic and political spheres could be considered as human-made factors of vulnerability.

### **2.3 The gender –poverty nexus**

One point of contestation about the conventional money metric approach to poverty was its assumptions about the household, considered to be a homogenous, harmonious, cooperative decision-making unit (Agarwal 1997: 2). This assumption was built on the presumption that households are units of production and consumption (Kandiyoti 1998: 136, Pearson 1992: 302). In reality households are sites where distribution of resources takes place. They are also social institutions that are informed by and inform unequal relations of power that exist in a community (based on gender, age, clan, ethnicity, and class). The unequal gender and generational relationships within the household for instance affects women's and children's access to resources within and outside the household (Agarwal 1997, Kandiyoti 1998, Pearson 1992). Such discrimination may reach 'to an extent that can threaten their survival chances' (Kabeer 1996: 15). Critique of mainstream conception of the household led to a gender analysis of intra-household relations that reveal the nexus between gender and poverty and its relationships at different scales (household, community, market and state).

Scott (1988: 42-44) explains that gender as a social relationship between men and women constituting four elements: culturally available symbols and metaphors to fix gendered meaning; normative concepts/ideologies that provide the interpretation of symbols and metaphors which are products of social agreement and are used to naturalize norms, and invent traditions of proper manhood and womanhood through social institutions; institutions including the family, kinship, labour market, and education institutions which are spaces where gendered norms and practices are produced and reproduced; and subjective identities that fix gendered identities with regard to what is to be

a man or a woman in a particular context at specified time. Subjective identities are not only about the constructs of gendered identities, but also are the way specific subjectivities are produced, reproduced and challenged. These four elements are interrelated and 'no one of them operates without the other' (*ibid.*).

Operating as an organising principle of social life, gender also defines the social position or status men and women occupy in social institutions (Lorber 1995:15, Scott 1988: 42). It is a situation where men tend to be ranked above women (Lorber 1995: 32, Pearson 1992: 292; 293). Gender inequality thus comes as a concept to refer to the unequal relationships and statuses between men and women. Lorber (1995:35) define gender inequality as 'the devaluation of 'women' and the social domination of 'men'. Gender inequality is manifested in the unequal division of labor whereby reproductive (domestic and care work) and community works are presumably associated with women whereas productive works with men (Pearson 1992: 297). The division that made women confine to the 'private' sphere also made them invisible in the 'public' sphere which is assumed to be men's domain.

The gender analysis of intra-household relations revealed that households are the primary social institutions that produce and reproduce gender inequality (Kandiyoti 1998: 135). Alternative models of households were developed as a result. Scholars worked on reconceptualization of the household include Sen, Agarwal, Kabeer, and Kandiyoti. The alternative models understood the household not only as arenas of harmony and cooperation, but also of contestations where one's idea and interest is privileged against the other based on her/his social position and bargaining power (Agarwal 1997: 3-5).

Amartya Sen's 'bargaining model' of household conceptualizes intra-household relations as a form of 'co-operative conflict' (Agarwal 1997: 2, Pearson quoting Sen 1992: 302). According to which, household decision making is a bargaining and negotiation process where decisions passed through the bargaining process tend to favour one with more bargaining power in the household (one with strong fallback position, perceived contribution and exit option). The bargaining process therefore has a seed of conflict as decisions



are made over 'conflict of interests' among members. Under such conditions, women's needs, priorities and concerns often are undermined because of their low bargaining power and position within their household and community. Feminists extend Sen's bargaining model by emphasising on the conjugal contract, and 'local conception of entitlement' that define 'who gets what through what sort of work and mechanism'. They focused on the importance of resources beyond the household, 'the socio economic and legal institutions including the market, the community and the state' that determine women's bargaining position within and beyond household (Agarwal 1997: 28, Kandiyoti 1998: 137, 141).

However, women and men 'do gender without thinking about it' (Lorber 1995: 13). They socialize existing norms of inequality since their childhood in institutions (the family, school, media, and workplace), and naturalizes and reinforce them with or without realizing it (Kandiyoti 1998: 143). As a result men and women will become bearers of unequal social relations instead of challenging it (Scott 1988: 43- 44). Kandiyoti thus argue that the task of the gender analyst should be to reveal how all forms of social hierarchy are gendered (1998: 45),

Despite the different models of the household, the point of emphasis here is the understanding of household as primary institution in which inequality between men and women are manifested and reproduced (Kandiyoti 1998: 135). Razavi emphasize the importance of looking at the domestic politics inside the household with regard to resource distribution (1999: 478), if projects have to meet their target (Pearson 1992: 307, Kandiyoti 1998: 141). The importance of analyzing gender and generational differential access to resources in poverty, policy design and implementation is also stressed (Razavi 1999: 474).

Similar researches conducted in the labor market (productive work outside the household) reveal that women's participation in the labor market is often influenced by the gendered structures surrounding them (Razavi 1999: 479-481). Women's entrance into the labor market is constrained by the 'conflicting demand between making a living and caring for the family'. They face 'time

and energy deficit' that emanates from their triple burden: productive, reproductive, and community work. The gendered practices in the labor market further affect the quantity and quality of women's participation (Kabeer 1996: 18). This is because labor markets are social institutions that are informed by and inform unequal gender relations that exist in a society. In conditions where women participate in the labor market, they are often situated in precarious, informal, and less remunerated types of work.

Women's poverty therefore is pre-structured. Their poverty however depends far more on the cultural context (Kabeer 1996: 18). Their capacity to change 'labor into income, income into choice, and choice into well being' is affected by the socio-cultural context in which they are living (*ibid.*). Razavi (1999: 473) argued that it is important to know 'how- through what social and institutional mechanisms – men and women slide in to poverty and stay there'.

Apart from inter-gender differences, intra-gender differences must also be recognized. Not all women are poor and not all poor women are poor in the same way (Kandiyoti 1998: 145, Razavi 1999: 476). Their experience vary historically as well as across and within societies based on their belongingness to other social categories including race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, class, and religion (Pearson 1992: 293). Gender therefore does not appear in isolation from other types of power relations but interacts with them to give a unique experience of women and men (Kandiyoti 1998: 140). Chambers quoted in Bernstein (1992: 22-25) for example used the term 'ascribed deprivation' to explain the variations of poverty according to the particular ways gender, race, ethnic, and caste identity are articulated.

It is therefore important to consider the context, history, geographical location, and other categories of social relations that interact with gender in analyzing gendered experience of poverty (Kabeer 1996: 14, Razavi 1999: 474). Efforts to capture these interactions led to the introduction of the concept intersectionality in feminist literatures.

## 2.4 Intersectionality, poverty, and intersectional vulnerability

Debates on intersectionality originated from Black Women active in the Civil Rights movement in the United States who resisted the discourse on the ‘culture of poverty’ placed on their communities (AWID 2004: 3). The concept of intersectionality emerged from consciousness-raising and signified the awareness about how the social position of Black women is shaped by an intersection between two hierarchical systems (gender and race). Drawing from the experience of unemployment, ill-health, domestic violence, denial of access to housing and social services, they view the conditions of poverty as emanating from their being ‘women’ and ‘black’ simultaneously. According to Burnham (2001:5) the term ‘double Jeopardy’ was first devised by Beal to capture socio-structural aspects of domination. The concept was gradually expanded to ‘triple jeopardy’ when class issues became more prominent among women of color (Black, Asian and Hispanic Americans) (*ibid.*). ‘Triple Jeopardy’ was used to questions how gender, class and race interact to produce simultaneous, sequential and compounded experiences of poverty and oppression at the work place, in the communities and at home.

Intersectionality became a full-fledge critique of gender theories for their tendency to treating gender as distinct category, to which race and class can be added. Intersectionality gained prominence as it gave the space to understand the complexity of ‘simultaneity of conditions’ (AWID 2004:1-2, Burnham 2001:2, Davis 2007:1) that shapes the experience of women and men in a given context. Ignoring intersectionality can mean overlooking the experiences of many different groups of marginalized women and therefore mis-specifying the ways gender power works for them.

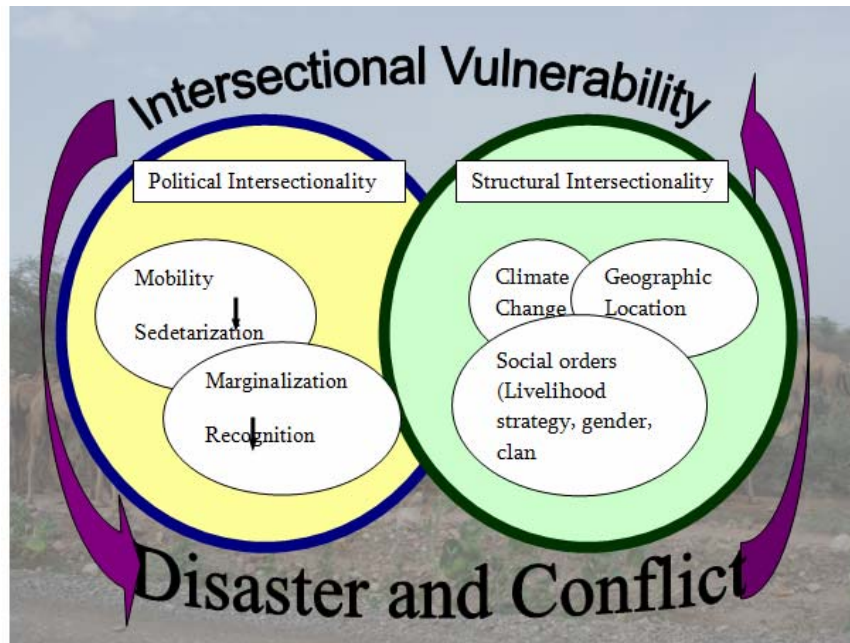
Kimberle Crenshaw was among the first to give substance to intersectionality by teasing out significant aspects of socio-structural dynamics behind the simultaneity of condition of oppression and its compounded impacts on women of color in a context of urban poverty and male dominated politics of resistance (Crenshaw 1991). In her ground breaking intervention which maps the workings of power at the margins, she distinguishes between structural and political intersectionality. Structural intersectionality is the

location of the social position of women of color at the intersection of gender, class and race hierarchies. Political intersectionality is the location of this position in the competing identity politics discourses-feminist and anti-racial. Practices of mobilization relied on single group's interests tended to miss out sub-groups within a group who were at the intersection of the two forms of articulation of power. She argued that understanding experiences of marginality through the lens of intersectionality will help to dissolve differences and provide ways in which 'group politics' could be constructed. Although debates on intersectionality have moved on to new terrains of analysis such as power and cultural representation, the gist of the idea is that progressive politics must use structural social analysis to resolve differences in group-based politics.

This research paper tries to bridge insights gained from the poverty and vulnerability debates with feminist writings on 'intersectionality'-a socio-structural phenomenon in response to the limits of a monolithic understanding of gender. It uses the concept *intersectional vulnerability* to analyse the impact of a convergence of repeated drought and conflict on pastoralist livelihoods and communities.

Crenshaw's categorization remains relevant to an analysis of pastoralist intersectional vulnerability in a context of repeated drought and conflict. In the paper structural intersectional vulnerability locates the vulnerability of pastoralism as a mode of life and pastoralists as heterogenous group at the cross-road of climate change, geographical location, and social orders. Political intersectional vulnerability is useful to reveal the politics of representation in identifying and framing pastoralist vulnerability as well as prescribing solution. Efforts to politicize pastoralists' vulnerability have done little to recognize the lived experience of pastoralist women, minority clans and the intersection of gender with clan relations within the mode of life. Sensitivity to specificities of contexts does not permit generalization about pastoralist's vulnerability, but it would still be possible to demonstrate how pastoralist vulnerability could be understood as an outcome of intersections of environmental and socio-political processes.

Figure 2. Analytical Framework – Intersectional Vulnerability



Source: Own illustration based on the discussion above

## 2.5 Benchmarking vulnerability

I draw on two sets of writings to benchmark pastoralist intersectional vulnerability, notably Moser's work on urban poor households (Moser 1998) and Rakodi's work on livelihood (Rakodi 2002) as well as vulnerability indicators developed in disaster studies to discuss on the case study.<sup>11</sup>

The deterioration or losses of one or more of the assets defined below are considered indications of vulnerability:

- human capital (including education and health);
- household relations (including social relations between members of the household such as gender and kinship relations that govern access to and control over resources, and division of labor);
- social capital (including community relations, relation between different clans, social cohesion, social network, and memberships in groups);

<sup>11</sup> The benchmarks are adopted from <http://www.climate-transitions.org/node/123>, Date accessed: 2October 2008

- political capital (including access to wider institutions of society, and representation in political process and decision making);
- productive assets (including livestock and land, and access to and control over the resources);
- natural capital (including natural resources such as local climate, land and water resources: their availability, productivity, and distribution);
- financial capital (including financial resources obtained from selling of livestock, crops, incense, and any other economic activity); and
- physical capital (including basic infrastructure, health, transportation, and education services) (Moser 1998, Rakodi 2002).

The vulnerability indicators developed in disaster studies and selectively used in the research are presented below: Their presence/absence or deterioration is considered as signals of vulnerability.

- adaptive capacity and resilience (ability to retain same basic structure and ways of functioning post disturbances including drought and food crises);
- coping strategies (strategies for survival); and
- disaster risk reduction interventions (any set of support to reduce the effect of the disturbances)

A missing dimension in the above discussion is the sense of ‘defencelessness’, ‘insecurity’, ‘isolation’, ‘exposure to risk, shocks and stress’. These are emotional reflections of the deterioration of the assets people use to sustain their livelihood. Vulnerability in the context of pastoralism moreover is not just about deterioration of assets but about the inability to counter uncontrollable threats to be able to ‘manage assets’ to sustain a mode of living with dignity. Such feelings equally explain the experience of vulnerability in the context of this research. They however cannot be captured by standard methods of assessment. Yet they must find their ways into academic interpretations of vulnerability.

**A concluding remark:**

This chapter looks at the conceptual links between poverty, disaster, vulnerability, and gender. The extension of the debate of poverty as a gendered

process has contributed to the understanding of why women tend to be poorer than men with in their societies and families. The gendered structures that define their positions affect their daily conditions of existence. The concept intersectionality that evolved in feminist theorizing on women experiences of poverty when they are located at the intersection of different hierarchies of power is extended to analyze pastoralist vulnerability: an outcome of intersecting ecological, socio-political and economic processes. In the coming chapters, Crenshaw's categorization of political and structural intersectionality will be adopted to locate vulnerability of pastoralists (social group), pastoralism (the mode of life), and pastoralist vulnerability (experience of the people) at the intersections of these processes.

## Chapter 3

# Vulnerability of Pastoralists/ism: A Case for Multi-casual and Intersectional Analysis

This chapter brings out intersecting factors that have contributed to the vulnerability of pastoralism and pastoralists. The purpose is to demonstrate how vulnerability of pastoralism and pastoralists as heterogeneous groups to drought and conflict can be understood as an outcome of interactions between different structures, namely phenomena (climate change), geographical location (spatial distribution), and social orders (based on livelihood strategy, gender, and clan). It made use of the concept of structural intersectional vulnerability to capture these interactions. The chapter also analyses how the main feature of the mode of life are affected along the indicators discussed in previous chapter. The analyses are based on the primary data collected as well as secondary data resources reviewed.

### 3.1 Structural intersectional vulnerability 1– an overview

The convergence of spatial distribution along susceptible geographic location, climate change and the ‘social construction of the pastoral mode of life’ that caused vulnerability to drought and conflict are discussed below.

#### ***3.1.1 Vulnerability as compounding impacts of climate change and - geographical location***

Climate changes manifested in global warming and unusual rainfall patterns (decline of amount and distribution) are now realities facing many people throughout the world. Though the patterns may differ between different ecological regions, the effect of climate change is felt in many parts of the world. Changing patterns and unpredictability of rainfall are ever increasing posing major challenges both to sustainable development and human security. Rising temperatures are followed by a rise in evapo-transpiration (ET) from water and soil surfaces and plants, causing plants to dry, wilt and ultimately die. Declines in rainfall reduce the amount of water available for domestic as well as production purposes. In the long-term it can disturb the water balance.



Climate changes are however not simple global phenomena that ‘just happens’. They partly are outcomes of human intervention. Exploitation of natural resources has created ecological imbalances. Increase in human population and consumption caused increased pressure on the natural resources leading to their depletion. Local processes and actions thus shape the magnitude of environmental damage climate change cause locally.

Ethiopian pastoralists are geographically distributed along the peripheral territory of the country along the Horn of Africa (see map 1.). The area occupied by pastoralists is characterized by low annual rainfall. Drought and a relative absence of peace and security within and across-border of countries are situated in pastoral areas. The disruption in the water balance due to global warming and climate change has been the main cause of drought in these areas (General Discussion 2002: 58).

**Map 1. Areas Occupied by Pastoralists**



Source: Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia website

Seasonal mobility to areas where there is sufficient moisture to support their livelihood is an adaptation mechanism to cyclical changes in temperatures and rainfall pattern. Yet their mobility deprives them from basic infrastructures, service providing institutions, and political participation (Devereux 2006: 16). The physical, human, and political capitals of pastoralists are by far low as compared to other parts of the country. Pastoralist communities have low education, health, and transportation services, and are less represented in the social, economic and political structures of the country (*ibid.*, Abdulahi 2003:31; 56). Habib (2007: 113-114) for example explained that the education enrolment rate of pastoralists communities is low compared to

the national average (68.5%) accounting 30.3 8% in SNRS and 21.9% in Afar region in 2004/05. Low political participation also means neither their concerns are well raised nor do they participate in decisions that affect their lives (Gebre 2001: 45). This has resulted in development of 'pastoral unfriendly' development policies and strategies in the past that aggravate instead of address the vulnerability of pastoralists (Beyene 2008: 10).

Being dependent, sometimes totally, on their natural environment and available resources (mainly land and water) for their livelihood, any change that affects these directly or indirectly affects them (Beyene 2008: 4). The depletion of natural resources and rising temperatures triggered a deterioration of human wellbeing as well as productive and financial assets. Both crop and livestock productions constitute the base of pastoral livelihood and the wellbeing of livestock is integral to human wellbeing (Pastoralist Elders 2002: 31). The inability to produce livestock and crops affects the quantity and quality of food intake as well as items for trade (Azeze 2002:54). Cutting trees either for domestic consumption or for trade in firewood and charcoal to compensate losses of productive and financial assets intensifies desertification in pastoral areas that in turn changes the local climate.

Decline in natural resources also increases competition for use and control over land area, water ponds and lakes. This further undermines the social cohesion within and between pastoralist and non-pastoralist communities (Abdulahi citing Kassa 2003: 54). The networks, co-operation, and land use arrangement systems shared between the different pastoralist groups become dysfunctional due to intensified tension and conflicts.

In the past ten years, the frequency of drought in pastoral areas had increased from once in five to ten years to once in every two to one years. The increased frequency of drought that is followed by famine in several cases (Azeze 2002: 51) has challenged the viability of the mode of life and the people in the system.

### **3.1.2 The ‘social construction’ of the mode of life - an intersecting structure**

Drought and conflict has been the main risk factors in pastoralist areas (Azeze 2002: 52, Beyene 2008: 12). Several authors have argued that the persistence of pastoral vulnerability to drought and conflict attributed to the long history of social, political, economic, and ecological exclusion of pastoralists (Gebre 2001, Kassa 2005, PFE website). Gebre (2001) argued the ‘social and cultural construction’ of the mode of life as ‘backward’, and the stereotyping of pastoralists as ‘destructive users’ of environment is the main source of their marginalisation. He noted the situation as:

*Still, pastoralism is too often regarded as an ‘archaic’ way of life that has to be challenged. It is viewed by national governments and planners as essentially irrelevant to development and often damaging to the habitat (2001:2)...[Furthermore] the land occupied by pastoralists was considered ‘state land’. The thinking about ‘unoccupied’, ‘un-owned’, or ‘abandoned’ land served as a justification by the Ethiopian government to revoke communal and tribal ownership and expropriate their land (2001:61)...Pastoralists are stereotyped as irrational and destructive users of land and so are the main cause of the problem of overpopulation and overgrazing in the lowlands of the country (2001:68).*

Influenced by the social and cultural constructions and dominated by highlanders, it is argued that the Ethiopian development strategies designed so far did not address the problems, needs, and priorities of pastoralists (Gebre 2001, PFE website). Instead, it brought about discriminatory treatments and entitlement systems in which pastoralists were discriminated in the process. Their discrimination is manifested in the form of ‘dispossession’ of the land pastoralists’ use for grazing cycle, continual marginalization, and dismissal of any value their mode of life have to offer. Eventually, pastoralists still are politically underrepresented, socially excluded, and developmentally marginalized (Abdulahi 2003, PFE website). Some of the ‘development activities’ in pastoralist areas such as-state farm expansion, environmental protection, resettlement schemes, and privatization of land have involved a revocation of ‘pastoral lands’ (Beyene 2008: 5, Gebre 2001:69). It is estimated that ‘2.6 million hectare of land has been taken away from pastoralists in the past 60 years’ without the consent of the people (pastoralists) that were using the land (Yemane 2003: 122). The restricted mobility that resulted due to reduction of the amount of land affected their production and productivity. It

also breakdown social ties due to increased competition over limited area (Beyene 2008:4, 140 and 201). Such competitions often end up with conflict that in severe cases might turn up into armed conflict (Abdulahi citing Kassa 2003: 54).

To sum up, the convergence of climate change, susceptible geographic location, and a national social order that places pastoralism outside of its vision of development has exacerbated pastoralist vulnerability in coping with drought and undermine traditional mechanisms of conflict avoidance. These factors are mutually re-enforcing and can have overlapping consequences.

### **3.2 Structural intersectional vulnerability 2 –how gender and clan shape the experience of vulnerability**

Exclusionary practices among pastoralists are based on social identities. Among others, the major causes for exclusion and discrimination include gender, kinship, and clan relations, and work identity in survival strategy<sup>12</sup> and level of income (Emana et al. 2007). Such relations create differences in exposure and experiencing vulnerability. Not all pastoralists are vulnerable and not those who are vulnerable experience vulnerability similarly. Barrett et al. for example, argue that many of the problems pastoralists are facing ‘apply only to identifiable sub-populations’ (2001:2).

This section is particularly interested in the gender and clan based social relation of power that caused heterogeneity in experiencing vulnerability among pastoralists. These relations produced different treatments, range of entitlements, and access to and control over resources among members discriminating women and minorities. Kapteijns (1995: 259) describes for instance gender is the major cause of inequality and intersects with class and clan in shaping the lives of Somali women in the context of Somali pastoral tradition. Women’s subordinate position mainly derive from ‘cultural and religious norms’ (Emana et al. 2007) and ideologies which define ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ supported by rules that govern men and women’s access to

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<sup>12</sup> Those include people with specialised skill such as handicrafts, blacksmith, and tannery. Examples include the Wattas in Borena, and Shebeles and Gaboye in Somali region (Emana et al., 2007).

and control over resources. These ideologies and social rules are institutionalized as ‘religious creeds and customary laws’ (Hassen 2007: 137).

Prevailing practices of the division of labor are based on gender and age. Adult male pastoralists mainly engage in herding and decision-making at the household and the community level. Young men do herding as well as serve as defence for the family (Hassen 2007: 135). Women primarily engage in caring and maintenance of the household. The domestic sphere is considered ‘exclusively for women’<sup>13</sup>.

As to access and control over productive assets, men have control over sale of large stock including cattle and camels (PFE 2007: 7) and decide about production strategies and when to sell or slaughter the livestock. However, their ownership is guaranteed through ‘male guardian’. Women have considerable contribution in the maintenance and production of livestock (Hassen 2007: 138). They have access to dairy products that they process from the family or clan’s livestock and may sell them along with handicrafts. But the income they earned goes to support the day to day consumption of the household. When divorced, they are given marginal benefits and inheritance of common property’ (Emana et al. 2007). Their ability to build their own productive assets thus is nearly nil in this context, so is their entitlement to household assets.

Gender-based differences in access to and control over resources have both social and economic consequences. The invisibility of women’s economic contribution re-enforces their lack of bargaining power and subordinate position in their household and society. This limits their access to education service where available. Discouraging attitudes towards female education by male family and community members, unfriendly school curriculum, timing, and distance that do not complement with their security and household responsibility, contribute to low level of women’s human capital compared to men (Hassen 2007: 155). This poses further constraints on their access to employment and competitiveness in the labour market.

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<sup>13</sup> Women do cooking, serving and feeding, building and maintaining shelter, caring for the sick, going to market, collecting fire woods , milking cattle, fetching water, etc

For the clan-based pastoral livelihood systems participation in community activities is very important. Participation however is structured along the lines of gender and seniority. Men can take on leadership role while women are denied access (Emana et al. 2007). Older women have access to decision-making in community affairs while the contribution of younger women is limited to catering.

The marginal position of women gives them no scope for resistance against ‘traditional practices’<sup>14</sup>, formally defined as Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs). Such practices are classified by the government as violence against women, covering acts of ‘physical, sexual, and psychological violence’. They include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), women battering, parental sex preference, incest, marital rape, inhibition of inheritance right, marriage by abduction, rape, and virginity testing (PFE 2007: 10-17). The high mortality rate among pastoral women, with 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the deaths attributed to pregnancy and delivery complications due to the combined effect of medical services and FGM, reflects the conditions of ‘simultaneity’ arising from structural inequality within the pastoralist gender order and lack of adequate government service delivery (*ibid.*: 45). These conditions create compounded impacts of gender oppression on women’s bodies and lives.

The clan-based discriminatory practices are derived from a person’s belonging to a clan of low social status (minority) within the pastoral mode of life (Emana et al. 2007). Clan based discriminatory practices are evident in resource distribution, resource sharing arrangement systems, and participation in community affairs where lower status clans tend to have a limited range of entitlement and representation. Their low status is translated to denial of access to capitals (natural, physical and social) during normal times and intensifies in times of crises (drought and conflict). The vulnerability of pastoralist women belonging to a minority is a condition of ‘simultaneity’.

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14 I put traditional practices under quote since the term is contested. Some argue that they are not part of the tradition but simply adoption of harmful practices, while others argue as apart of the tradition. The controversy over ‘whose traditional practices are harmful for who?’ is also there.

Although under the general principles of pastoralist social order gender and clan relations shape the vulnerability of women and minorities, their vulnerability is exacerbated under the condition of resources depletion and conflict. Such conditions further deteriorate the limited assets women and minorities have. Conflict intensifies women responsibility of care provisioning as it often ends up causing deaths or physical impairments of men from both conflicting parties.

**A concluding remark:**

This chapter demonstrated how pastoralists' vulnerability could be understood as an outcome of a convergence of different forms of vulnerability. Pastoralists vulnerability is a function of their geographic location, climate change and social construction of the mode of life. The gender and clan based social relation of power that governs access to and control over crucial assets is seen affecting particular subgroups (the women and minority) more adversely than the relatively privileged.

## Chapter 4

# The Case Study: Understanding Experience of Drought thorough Structural Intersectional Vulnerability

This chapter presents a situated understanding of vulnerability based on the primary data collected in Shinile Woreda and available document reviewed about the Woreda. Its aim is to show how different structures and processes (within and outside local systems) intersect to produce the particular experience of vulnerability of Shinile pastoralists: focusing on women members. The compounded effect on the coping strategy, adaptive capacity, and resilience of Shinile pastoralists in the take of drought and food crises are also discussed.

### 4.1 The context: Shinile Woreda

Shinile Woreda is one of the 6 Woredas under Shinile Zone in SNRS. The Woreda has a population of 113,630, of whom 47% are men and 53% women (Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency, 2005 census).<sup>15</sup> The people of Shinile belong to the sub-clan Issa, which inhabits the area between Dire-Dawa to the Republic of Djibouti (Devereux 2006: 35). Their livelihood is based on livestock and crop production (Kassa et al. 2005: 198, Mikrie 2005: 5)

It is reported that the Shinile Zone is the poorest among the nine Zones in the SNRS (Devereux 2006:35). Drought is considered a ‘permanent problem’ in the Zone because of its repeated occurrence (Berkele 2002: 20, Kassa et al 2005: 192). Recurrent conflict with the neighbouring Afar clan over limited but deteriorating natural resources, regional border, control of trade route, and access to Awash River is also recorded (though the case is not the same throughout the Woredas under the Zone) (Devereux 2006: 35, Kassa et al. 2005: 195, 198, 200).

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<sup>15</sup> Available online: [http://www.csa.gov.et/text\\_files/national%20statistics%202005/Population.pdf](http://www.csa.gov.et/text_files/national%20statistics%202005/Population.pdf), Date accessed: 10 October 2008



Besides having decades of experiences of drought, the increasing frequency of drought threatens the community. They speak that the frequency has increased from once in five years to once in two years. They even experienced two drought seasons in 2007/08 alone because of the failure of the expected seasonal rainfall. The 2007/2008 drought, according to them, was much severe than they ever experienced (Field note, interview with Shinile pastoralists, 21 July to 1 August 2008). This is partly because they did not receive any support in the last two years from GOs and NGOs. The remarkable increase in food prices also characterise the unique experience of the 2007/08 drought.

Polygamous family structure is common in the Woreda. I was told that a man can marry as many as four wives. The wives interviewed have five children on average.

One speciality about Shinile Woreda that could other wise have aggravated the condition of drought is the lack of conflict. The Shinile Woreda is peaceful compared to other Woredas in the Zone. As some of the interviewees confirm the Issa's are peaceful:

*We Issas are peaceful people. We want peace and harmony with others. We do not engage in conflict with neighbouring clans (Field note, Abdella, Halima, and Kedr 21, 23 July 2008)*

## **4.2 Climate change and geographic location – the main cause of vulnerability**

The continuous climatic change that brought about failure of rainfall for two cropping seasons has been the major cause of drought in Shinile Woreda (Devereux 2006: 35). The community totally depends on rainfall for their livelihood, both livestock and crop production. The drastic effect of rainfall failure is further aggravated by the increasing desertification of the area that eventually rises the environmental temperature. Massive firewood collection activities were observed during the field work meant to be sold as firewood and charcoal. The community knows that their action exacerbates desertification on the area and that would affects the local climate. But they do not have other alternatives. According to them, firewood collection is an

alternative economic activity to compensate the failure of crop and animal production (Field note, interview with Shinile pastoralists, 21 July to 1 August 2008).

Their geographical distribution in the ‘extreme north SNRS’ (Devereux 2006: 35) also play a pivotal role to their vulnerability. The ‘cut-off and isolation’ of their location from the rest of SNRS has made them have ‘few places to move with their animals for food and water’ during dry seasons. Devereux further argued that their ‘proximity to the poor Djibouti land as oppose to Somalia or the rest part of Ethiopia’ also contributed to their vulnerability (*ibid.* 11; 12).

### **4.3 Other converging factors – the food crises, lack of attention and support**

The discussions below look into the lack of infrastructure and support and the food crises as converging factors that aggravate the experience of drought among Shinile pastoralists.

#### ***4.3.1 Less infrastructure and service providing institutions***

Lack of attention is observed in terms of (un)availability of basic service delivery institutions: education, health and infrastructure. Shinile Woreda has fewer infrastructures in basic services. The Woreda has 2 schools (elementary and secondary), a health centre, and a road and railway for transportation. The education service is available for the agro-pastoralists communities. Arrangements are not in place for mobile pastoralists. The community is satisfied with the education service as they are sending their children to school. Both boys and girls are going to school, but girls have high tendency to stop education after elementary level. Marriage and family responsibility is the main reason behind.

*We are now sending out children to school. Education is good for our children as they will have better future. But the health centre is dysfunctional. There are no professionals at the health centre. In case they are there, the drugs they order are not available. We prefer to go to Dire Dawa therefore. (Field note: Collective concern 21 July to 1 August, 2008)*

The community however is dissatisfied about the health service for it does not have qualified health personnel. Despite well furnished it is with medical

equipments, the people do not benefited. Women and children are affected more from lack of such services. All the interviewees recall incidences of deaths of women due to prolonged labour before reaching Hospital for medical support.

A road and railway transport systems are available in the Woreda. It links the community with neighbourhood cities and Djibouti. It is an option for diversifying livelihood strategy such as trading. However, the use of the route for such service is constrained by government intervention. The community used to trade commodities from and to Djibouti through the railway system. Trading used to be one of the income generating activities for the community particularly for women who used to trade mainly rice and sugar from Djibouti and sell them in nearby cities, largely in Dire Dawa. The trade route however was banned with the recent controversies over contraband trade in the name of 'illegal' trade. The people interviewed particularly the women sadly responded to this grim reality. They believe that they are not illegal traders since they were paying taxes for the government. They express their anger as:

*We used to trade Sugar and Rice and support our family. We can decide on what we earn from the trading. We were not depending only on our husband's income from livestock marketing since we have our own. Now, the ban of the trade made us dependent on our husband. ...They say we are illegal traders. But we are not. We pay taxes whenever we are asked. The told us once that we do not have license to trade but did not arrange a way where we can get license. We stop the trading as they were confiscating the commodities we bought from Djibouti. (Field note: Collective concern 21 July to 1 August, 2008)*

The support from state in supporting and providing opportunity structures to diversify the livelihood strategy of the community is thus weak. Such structures may increase the opportunity of the community to diversify their livelihood strategy (General Discussion 2002: 60). There is no industry apart from the local government branch offices and bureaus that provide employment option for a very few people. There is limited opportunity for paid job. The lack of industry not only did deprive the community from diversifying their livelihood strategy, it also contributed to migration of

educated and skilled human power among the community to other places in search for job<sup>16</sup>.

#### **4.3.2 Lack of disaster reduction intervention**

Lack of support is measured in terms of presence or absence of disaster reduction interventions in conditions of drought from development actors (both GOs and NGOs). The effect of drought in Shinile was further intensified by the lack of such support. All the population interviewed explained the fact that they were denied of any support they used to get during drought periods from both GOs and NGOs for two years now.

What was more striking was the presence of big Emergency Food Security Reserve Administration (FRSRA) in Shinile Woreda that serves as a grain store for the Eastern part of Ethiopia. It was meant to be distributed in times of emergency (post natural or human made disasters). Food grains were being distributed to other places including Zones in SNRS except Shinile Woreda during the time of data collection. Three men among the interviewees explained their denial from getting support is because of their *Issa* identity which according to them is the minority as oppose to the majority *Ogaden*<sup>17</sup> clan in SNRS. In their own words:

*It is the regional government [emphasising the Ogaden's] who excluded us because of our identity as Issa. We do not even have a seat in the regional parliament. Even the budget allocated is small. They (emphasising the Ogadens) are corrupted. They benefit people from their clan instead of helping the needy. (Field note: Abdella, Kasim, and Mobammad, 29 and 30 July 2008)*

But it was only the three men interviewed that brought the issue of minority. They were local elders of whom one is a committee member in the local school, the other a member of the Woreda parliament, and the third one a pastoralist elder. What they have said perhaps could be correct taking into account their position in the community that might allow them to see the socio-political dynamics. However, it is difficult for me to affirm that Issa's are

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<sup>16</sup> It could be argued that the capacity of the Woreda to retain educated and skilled human power is low. It needs however further investigation of the rate of out migration to reach to such argument.

<sup>17</sup> There are several ethnic groups in SNRS, and Ogaden is one of them. However I used here the categorization as explained by my research population, the 'non-Issa' clans as 'the Ogaden'.

minorities taking into account the voice of those three men<sup>18</sup>. Instead, I would leave it to be an area for further research and investigation.

*We once were organised in group and went to the food store. We asked for food. But nobody responded to our demands. Instead, a police force was sent to disperse us using force. They are very fast in sending police force but not in lending us their help. We do not know the government. We are not getting any help from the government (Field note, Abdulahi, An elderly with 2 wives and 15 children, and Sofia, an elderly woman with six children and five grand children 22 and 24 July 2008)*

There were no responses while the starved community was crying out for help. Discussion with the head of the EFSRA as to why food was not distributed to the Shinile community brought issues of working procedure and need assessment report. The EFSRA accepts the fact that the local people of Shinile do need support and no food had distributed in area in the past two years (Field note, interview with EFSRA, 28 July 2008). The working procedure however do not allow them to distribute food unless the need assessment reports done at the Zone level reported to the Federal Government through appropriate channels bring them orders to distribute. EFSRA believes the problem lies with the Zonal administration for they did not report the drought incidence. Discussions conducted with Shinile Zone Administration Office (SZAO), Disaster prevention and Food Security Bureau (DPFSB), and Save the Children–United Kingdom (SC-UK) concerning why they did not report the case disclose the failure of early warning prediction system while conducting the need assessment. According to them, the expert who conducted the assessment predicted the availability of sufficient food and moisture (rainfall) for 10 months. They however were part of the assessing team (Field note, interview with SZAO, DPFSB, and SC-UK, 28 July and 1 August, 2008). The NGOs who used to distribute emergency aid in the past responded that their project on the Woreda has phased out in the last two years.

Whatever the case may be and the reasons provided to immune from being responsible, the working system has caused a system of inequality. In this

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<sup>18</sup> To reach to such conclusion, it needs collecting data form other Zones in the region and conducts a comparative analysis in terms of their representation in the political structure, infrastructure, and availability of opportunity structures.

process, some group of people got emergency food aid while others are denied from. As Amartya Sen's work on theories of famine explain 'Famine occurs not only from a lack of food, but from [system of] inequalities built into mechanisms for distributing food' (Sen 1981: 7-8). The starvation of the people thus was not due to lack of food but failure of a functioning system of assessment.

### ***4.3.3 The food crises and deterioration of coping strategies***

The dramatic rise in food prices that started in 2007 and continued in 2008 had converged with drought. This convergence intensified the effect of drought as the community was neither able to produce nor afford to buy food due to drought and increase in food prices. Fatuma, an elderly widowed lady explains:

*I have never seen a drought like this in my life. This year's is different. Earlier we used to buy food with the money we saved during the wet seasons or otherwise use the food we produced and stored during the rainy season. But this year, we can not survive. The increase in price is more than double, more than we can afford (Field note, 22 July 2008).*

Coping strategies adopted by pastoralists includes 'sales of asset, use of reserve stock, migration, charcoal/firewood selling, food sharing, and food aid' (Berkele 2002: 23, Mesfin 2002: 46).

Strong social capital that is based on neither clan nor kinship relations exists. They were coping from the striking effect of drought through use of reserve foods and strong social networks. Mobile pastoralists (those who entirely depend only in livestock production) from surrounding villages, having lost their livestock, have sheltered in the Woreda to save their lives. According to my interviewees, they help each other because one seeks the help of the other as long as one has something to share. As most of them have experienced repeated drought, they also perhaps are sure that they could experience it again and be in a position seeking support from others.

*We Issa's are peaceful people ...we need peace and harmony. We share what we have till we finish the last grain ... we can not shelter and provide them food anymore as we ourselves have noting to eat. We will wait until we all die. (Field note: Collective concern 21 July to 1 August, 2008)*

Nevertheless, social network and cohesion for survival cannot stand by itself. It is a function of other assets including natural, productive, and financial

assets. The deterioration of these assets with the persistence of drought, the food crises, and the lack of disaster risk reduction intervention has deteriorated the amount of assets to be shared, thus too is their coping strategy (Azeze 2002:55).

#### **4.4 Gender relations and gendered experience of vulnerability**

##### ***4.4.1 Gender relations***

Women position in the household and the community varies, though generally I argue that they have a subordinate position<sup>19</sup>. The social relations in the community and household are in such a way that women sphere is the domestic sphere whereas the public sphere is assumed to be men's.

The decision-making patterns in the household vary from consultation processes to women having no voice, to women making crucial decision depending on the structure of the household (polygamous, monogamous, widowed, and divorced). Though women have ultimate power over household decisions in female headed households (divorcees and widowed), their control over decisions get declined in polygamous and monogamous households in that order. A point of understanding made here is that gender intersects with household structure in determining women's decision making position in the household. Management of household asset is exclusively women's responsibility. Yet it does not directly give them control over them. Women took the prime responsibility of raising and nurturing children in polygamous family structure while the husband responsibility is to support the family financially (Field note, interview with Shinile pastoralists, 21 July to 1 August 2008).

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<sup>19</sup> Their subordinate position however is my understanding based on my observation and data from the field and not those of the women interviewed except the head of Women Affairs Office who affirms women's subordinate position. Looking the position of women in terms of access and control over resources, participation in community affair, and the division of labour made me say they have a subordinate position. However I noticed that Questions like 'Do you have control over land and livestock? Why are you practising FGM? Who decides when to get married? Why are not men helping you in cooking and caring?' were annoying for some of my interviewees. They perhaps have accepted and internalised their position as part of their tradition and are reinforce it on their children. There were responses like 'These are our traditions. We inherited from our great- great-grand families. We kept it and

Ownership of productive assets is in men's hands. In male-headed households, men took over ownership of livestock, land and houses while women have a 'use right' that do not necessarily give her ownership. The practice of women's inheritance is also common. It is mainly done to maintain the wealth (productive assets) within the family of the male line. In case the man dies, the tradition obligates the women to remarry the brother of the late husband. But if she refuses to marry the brother or if a woman divorces, she will be given marginal benefits and more of the wealth remains with the husband or husband family unless she has an adult son who would claim for owning the assets.

The social division of labor is in a way that generally men have little task while women are overburdened with multiple tasks. Looking after livestock (cattle, sheep, camels, and goats), doing some income generating activities like firewood collection and charcoal making, engaging in community decision-making meetings and livestock marketing are predominantly men's task. Men spend the rest of their days chewing *Khat* (local mild drug) and chatting with their male friends. Boys follow their father's foot step. They help their fathers in herding livestock but also go to school during school hours (Field note, interview with Shinile pastoralists, 21 July to 1 August 2008). Women do domestic works (cleaning, catering, feeding, caring and nurturing children, elderly and the sick), productive activities (such as petty trading of *Khat*, hot drinks and snacks, and firewood in market places), and participate in community activities. The fact that they are burdened by numerous tasks is admitted by male community members. The women however think that is their 'social and cultural' responsibility. Women use the money obtained from productive activities to support their family consumption. Daughters do domestic work as well as help their mothers. They also go to school. Women's community participation is limited to catering services though there are differences in participation among women based on their age group with elderly women having opportunity to participate in community decision

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we will keep it in the future also'. The set of web of obligations and expectations in the family made them think this way. They can not be blamed for thinking this way as that was the only 'world' they know.



making (Field note, interview with Shinile pastoralists, 21 July to 1 August 2008).

‘Traditional’ practices, now considered HTPs, including FGM, early and arranged marriage are common in Shinile. Yet there is increasing awareness<sup>20</sup> about the harms of the practices that led to transformation of some of the practices. Infibulation<sup>21</sup> type FGM (which still is practiced as religious and cultural obligation) for example is replaced with Sunna<sup>22</sup>; and arranged marriage with marriage by consent. Yet early marriage (of a girl between the ages 15 to 18) is still evident despite the consent of the girl (Field note, interview with Women’s affairs Office, 29 July 2008). The question one can raise here is to what extent the decisions of the girls are conscious decisions since their thoughts could be influenced by the socio-cultural environment they are living in.

#### ***4.4.2 Gendered experience of vulnerability***

The gist of the discussion above is women’s lack of ownership over productive assets and low status in Shinile Woreda. This made them more vulnerable compared to their male counterparts due to (a) the very nature of lack of resources under their control and (b) their principal responsibility of raising children. When experiences of drought and food crises are added to such context, women have suffered more. This is because: Firstly, there is decline/loss of productive assets (livestock and land) due to drought. The consequence erodes the financial assets of the household. Women’s day to day engagement with market to maintain the consumption of the household to the level possible forces them to pursue diverse livelihood strategies.<sup>23</sup> However, the diverse strategies they pursue to absorb the shocks created by drought and the food crises increase their burden thus become overburdened (Field note, 21 July to 1 August 2008).

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<sup>20</sup> The Woreda level Women’s Affairs Office and the effort by local NGOs made efforts to change the attitudes towards HTPs.

<sup>21</sup> Infibulation consists of cutting and removing the labia-majora, labia minora, and part of clitoris, and then stitching it to narrow down the vaginal orifice.

<sup>22</sup> Sunna involves cutting and removal of clitoris of the outside female genital organ.

<sup>23</sup> Walking long distance to fetch water, firewood collection and marketing, petty trading, even begging are included

Secondly, some of the women are left with sole responsibility of raising and caring for children and the elderly under the condition of drought. Men migrate to nearby cities to escape the effect of drought and search for better future. Men were also observed being recruited by Hurso Military Camp during the field work. Most of them left their wife/wives and children back in Shinile. Some women also migrated leaving their children with grandparents in the village (Field note, interview with an elderly widowed lady, 23 July 2008). As the migrated men (and few women) in some cases might not return to the village due to the challenge or opportunity they encounter with, those remained in the village will bear the responsibility of caring for the remaining family members. Drought induced migration therefore cause gender and age specific experiences where women and elderly tend to suffer more as a result.

Finally, women also suffer more from disruption of social relations that comes with drought. 'Masculinity' or 'maleness' is defined in terms of the number of livestock owned in Somali pastoralists' culture. Such culture/social role is challenged when the number of livestock a man owns declined due to deaths of livestock as droughts progress. As the result, the droughts defy the social position of men. It also reduced their economic power in their households. In contrast, women's engagement in diverse livelihood activities to compensate the losses gave them better economic power. The transfer of responsibility of men to women in 'economic' terms undermines men's social position both in the community and the household trapping them in condition of 'masculinity crises'. Masculinity crises manifests in terms of increased use of local drugs, *khat*, and disruption of household relation (increased disagreements and battering of women).

**A concluding remark:**

Climate change and geographical location is the main cause of the vulnerability of Shinile pastoralists. Lack of attention and support from development actors, and the food crises also characterised and converged in the 2007/08 Shinile Zone drought experience. All together, the convergence between the factors affected the adaptive capacity and resilience as well as the coping strategies of Shinile communities. It also disturbed the way the community is functioning.

Not only gendered experience differed but also new gender orders have emerged when women start entering into public places doing income generating activities and men lost their livestock- their basis of masculinity. The repeated failure of rainfall, the loss of livestock, the closure of the trade route, and the apparent loss of alternatives made the Shinile community destitute.

The persistence of drought needs immediate intervention from both state and non state actors. Otherwise, it may cause generational impact on the human capital as children are not getting sufficient and nutritious diet to support their physical and mental development. Their education chances to escape future poverty may also be stunted.

## Chapter 5

# Political Intersectional Vulnerability: Competing Perspectives and Representations

The history of repeated drought, famine, and conflict in pastoralist areas has attracted policymakers, NGOs, researchers and academicians in the past ten years<sup>24</sup>. Pastoralism and pastoralist vulnerability has become a centre of competing discourses representing different interests. Two discourses came out bold – the discourse held by the government and that of PFE. The government articulates the interest of nation-building and frames Pastoralism as a vulnerable mode of life and pastoralists as people in need of assistance for a transition to sedentary settlement. It has been regarded as a means to social inclusion (Beyene 2008: 9). PFE advocates semi-autonomy in respect of the mode of life, blaming the government politics of representation which constructs the mode of life in negative terms.

This chapter analyses and contrasts the two perspectives from the stance of situated knowledge critical to both the foundationalist (strong positivist) and ant-foundationalist (post-modernist) positions which informs the government's and PFE's perspective respectively (see more under 1.3).

### 5.1 Development, national security and environmental control: the Government's perspective

The current policy of the Ethiopian government policy towards 'pastoralist development' is ridden with ambiguity and conflicting meanings. On the one hand, it shows clear signs of the model of voluntary sedentarization, seemingly based on the view that pastoralist vulnerability stems from their mobility. On the other hand vast efforts are underway to recognise the pastoralist mode of life. Article 40 of the current Ethiopian constitution states that:

*'Ethiopian pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands' (Source: <http://www.ethiopar.net/>)*

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<sup>24</sup> In the 2002, the number of NGOs working in pastoral areas reached 40 -45 (G/Micheal cited in Abdulahi 2003: 55) with rising number afterwards.

The establishment of institutional frameworks such as the 'Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee (PASC) in the Federal Parliament, Federal Inter-ministerial Board with technical committees, Pastoral Affairs Bureaus at federal and regional levels, and recognition of PFE are clear attempts to give voices to pastoralists in the process of national development policy-making and implementation (Abdulahi 2003:55-56). The effort to inculcate pastoralist concern in the Ethiopian Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP) and A Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) also shows the effort to recognise pastoralist concern in policy documents.

Yet the sedentarization agenda appears in several crucial policy documents. The Pastoral Development section of the 2002 Ethiopian PRSP document clearly states that 'the objective is to settle the pastoral population, despite the fact that the cultural transformation and persuasions may take decades' (FDRE 2002: 72). The Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation (ADLI) strategy of the country also places emphasis on 'crop cultivation within the context of sedentary peasant agriculture. ADLI marginalise the pastoral livestock production system though it is part of agriculture' (Gebre 2001: 49, Tegegn 2003: 5). Similarly, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Statement on Pastoral Development explains 'phased voluntary sedentarization along the banks of the major rivers. This is the main direction of transforming pastoral societies into agro-pastoral system, from mobile to sedentary life, from rural to small pastoral towns and urbanisation (FDRE 2001 cited in Devereux 2006: 172).

Controlling pastoralist mobility through voluntary sedentarization is clearly connected with several development goals. At one level, land use is a major issue because the Pastoralists' population constitute 10-12% of the total but occupies over half of the country's land mass (nearly 61%). Overpopulation in the highlands requires relocation of people to less densely populated lowlands where pastoralist communities use for grazing cycle. The expansion of development activities such as commercial agriculture and demarcation of environmental protected areas (Parks) also necessitate making use of lowlands (Gebre 2001:69). 'In the past 60 years, '2.6 million hectare of pastoral land was used for various purposes' (Yemane 2003: 122, 2007: 61).

The absence of alternative development schemes and compensation led to a gradual loss of pastoralist traditional rights of access to a large area of land and a conflict of perspectives (Tegegn<sub>a</sub> 2003: 66). What pastoralists see as their rights of access to grazing land is seen by the government inefficient land use due to the lack of proportionality between the people and the landmass they occupy.

At another level, the difficulty in administering mobile communities who have no permanent residence and who adopt seasonal shifting of membership to different communities depending on their mobility patterns also appears to be an issue (Abdulahi 2003: 40). Their mobility and lack of administrative boundary is seen as an 'administrative threat' (*ibid.*, Beyene 2008: 4). Investing on mobile institutions that provide basic services is seen costly with limited prospects for success if pastoralists continue to move (Getahun 2003:8). Participation of pastoralists in mainstream political structures remains limited. Thus, a sedentary way of life appears to the government as a key solution to these problems.

In addition national security concerns also have emerged as a problem. Pastoralists live in areas bordering Sudan in the west, Kenya in the South West, Somalia in the South East, and Djibouti in the East (Hurrissa 2003: 78). Political turmoil and recurrent conflicts within and between these countries, excluding Djibouti, not only undermines the safety of mobile pastoralists but is also seen as a threat to national security (Abdulahi 2003: 40). From the government's perspective pastoralists have to settle in order to keep the peace and order in the community and the country.

Several scholars have pointed to the fact that despite the government's firm stand on the sedentarization of pastoralists as the only long-term option for future of their way of life, failures have been reported in several places (Devereux 2006: 19, 35, 98, Kassa et al. 2005: 187). Three major explanations have been offered. Firstly, sedentarization disregards the longstanding coping mechanisms of lived realities of pastoralists to facing harsh environmental conditions. Confining pastoral communities was not a solution for the

pastoralists who live in environmentally fragile environment but a factor of aggravation of their vulnerability (Gebre 2001: 98- 101, Kassa et al. 2005: 207).

Secondly, the shift from pastoral mode of life to sedentarization is not a simple transition but involves changes in livelihood strategy, mind setting, culture, and social orders. A study on the settlement processes of the Negev Bedouin Arab tribes in Israel and the Maasai tribes in Kenya for instance revealed the increase in use and abuse of substance (drugs) among the settled youth due to ‘conflicting social, values, norms and behavioural patterns, rapid social change, frustrations, unemployment and lack of alternatives’ (Abu-Saad 2001:20- 27, 33). Similarly, Devereux research findings among the Somali pastoralists in Ethiopia indicate the increase in consumption of Khat (a local mild drug) among Somali men due to the contradiction that created as a result of ‘being displaced to towns where they are unemployed and idle’ and due to inability to support their families among other factors (2006: 123). These frustrations owe themselves to the inability to play the socially assigned role within the context of their social system. This often affects household relations and manifests in the form of disagreements, aggression, and domestic violence that in some instances may reach to the level where the family breaks.

Finally, some authors point out that pastoralists are not receptive to sedentarization because ‘sedentarization, centralization..., and regularization ...contradict with the pastoralist’s need for flexibility’ (Devereux 2006: 168). Sedentarization restricts mobility, which is the core principle of pastoralism. The lack of acceptability is also due to the fact that the solution did not come from the people; it was imposed upon pastoralists instead. Watkins et al. (2002: 328) emphasises the importance to give ‘analytical significance to ethnic identity, group structure, and indigenous knowledge systems’ in effective delivery of relief, basic services and development investment’. Such an approach would acknowledge the significance of the social worlds of pastoralists; understand their distinct social structures, functioning, and local knowledge as a basic step in implementation of any strategy.

To sum up, by framing pastoral vulnerability as a problem derived from their mobility and by prescribing sedentarization of pastoralists as a ‘silver

bullet' to all problems, the government seems to be driven by the agenda of national development which simplifies the significance of differences in terms of culture, identity, and knowledge and the complex and multidimensional characteristics of pastoralist vulnerability. As scholars have pointed out, mobility for pastoralists is not a choice but an adaptive obligation. They move because of the harsh environment they are facing (Pastoralists Elders 2002: 32). Some of the government's 'development activities' in pastoralists' areas have caused 'dispossession' of 'pastoralists land'. Dispossession not only deteriorates their natural capital that is used for livestock and crop production; it also aggravated their vulnerability by depreciating their social and productive assets. The reduction of land area for grazing increased competition and eventually conflicts between pastoralists breaking down the social cohesion. It also led to environmental resource deterioration due to over-utilization of limited land. Recommending them to settle in a harsh environment without compensation, supportive measure or scope to explore mixed models is bound to make them more vulnerable (Abdulahi 2003: 59). Such a recommendation also fails to specify specific dimensions of vulnerability faced by sub-groups among pastoralists. Finally, issues of national security go beyond the problems of Pastoralism and involve diverse actors within the nation and the regions. Making pastoralists the scapegoat for failure in other areas seems not only unjust but can also reinforce their vulnerability in the long run.

## **5.2 Marginalization and lack of recognition: PFE perspective**

The starting point of PFE's counter discourse is the view that the Ethiopian government's 'social and cultural' construction of pastoralism treats this mode of life as 'archaic' and unsuitable to its development strategies. According to which, the view of the government is informed by the linear view on 'modernization' where traditional forms of life are displaced as the 'other' entity, framed as 'primitive' and in need of transformation into sedentary agriculture and eventually to a modern urban life. PFE repeatedly speaks the language of recognition of pastoralism as a viable mode of life in its advocacy for pastoralist rights, backed by external funding agencies and international human right instruments (Tegegn<sub>b</sub>, 2003: 147).



PFE's appears to be anti-foundationalist in its gravitation towards social constructivism as critique. Yet by embracing international human rights standards it also embraces the foundationalist position of the universality of rights. Its statement on the need to include pastoralist concern in the country's national plan states:

The presence of a long history of political, economic, and socio-cultural marginalisation of pastoralists stemmed from old mainstreaming view from the side of the decision maker (PFE 2006)

PFE believes the mainstream approach that is influenced by the astern view on the mode of life results in economic, political, and ecological marginalization of pastoralism and the pastoralists. In PFE's view, their economic marginalisation owes to the fact that the economic contribution of pastoralism to the national economy is not recognised and market structures are not established albeit the fact that pastoralism accounts for over 15% of the national GDP (Beyene citing Coppock, Girma, Bonfiglioli 2008: 3, Tegegn<sub>a</sub> 2003: 68, Pastoralist Elders 2002: 33). The absence inclusive political system and structure that converges with the pastoralist mode of life are intersecting with limited representation of the pastoralists in the decision making structures of the country. This eventually marginalizes them from participating in the political processes and decisions that affect their lives. Their ecological marginalisation attributed to the very nature of pastoralists occupying fragile ecology and that of government intervention that force to occupy marginal lands with low productive potential (Gebre 2001:46, Berkele 2002: 25, Beyene 2008: 3, Field note, discussion with IPAS, PFE website)

PFE follow a right's based approach in its effort towards addressing the marginal voices of pastoralists and heal the historical disadvantage of these communities. Central to its advocacy and campaigning is the motto 'pastoralism is a viable mode of life' and 'the right for [pastoralists] development is a constitutional right' (PFE 2006: 3). It advocates for the advancement of the right of pastoralist to live the way they choose to, to get their choice respected, protected, and supported. PFE also argues that 'pastoralism is the only efficient and effective way to utilize virtually inaccessible remote range resources and ecology' (*ibid.*).

Conducting policy research, advocacy and lobbying are the cores in its efforts. In the last ten years, it has developed policy documents including ‘The Chapter on Pastoralism’ to be included in the 2002 PRSP and the 2006 PASDEP national plan of the country. PFE conducted four national level conferences on pastoralism. It also contributed to the recognition of the Ethiopian Pastoralists Day (EPD) as a national day, and establishment of the Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee (PASC)<sup>25</sup> in the House of Peoples Representatives and Pastoral Commissions at the federal and regional levels (PFE 2006: 4).

Despite nearly 10 years of struggle and valuable efforts, PFE’s discourses and action are also ridden with contradictions. The feasibility of the language of ‘recognition’ used by PFE is questionable considering contemporary challenges pastoralism and pastoralists are facing. It also bypasses the realities faced by pastoralist subgroups, the women and minority clans. The viability of PFE’s arguments may be queried on four grounds as follows.

Firstly, the fact that pastoralists live in ecologically fragile zones together with the reality of climate change posing real threats to this mode of life more than any ‘social construction’ is mis-specified and not clearly articulated in the PFE’s recognition agenda. The trends show that climatic and environmental conditions in pastoralist areas, such as the Shinile Woreda, are worsening causing repeated history of drought with increasing frequency (Pastoralist Elders 2002: 33, Yemane 2003: 75, 121). Taking into account this challenge, it can be argued that a mere agenda of recognition per se do not address the threat climate change and fragile ecology brought about to the mode of life and the people.

Secondly, population pressure both in the highland and lowlands are realities in need of solutions. In the highlands, the increase in population requires relocation of people to the lowlands. The lowlands are occupied

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<sup>25</sup> Though, PFE reported the establishment of PASC as success. A deeper analysis on the representation of PASC has been criticised for several reasons: ‘for the fact that the committee comprised of members that came from non-pastoralists and better-off background, for being a structure than a real representation, for lacking representation of pastoral women, and for the contradictory position of members regarding the future of pastoralism (sedentarization vs. recognition with support’ (Mussa, 2004).

predominantly by pastoralists and the increase in population causes increasing pressure on the environment. This eventually brought droughts (Pastoralist Elders 2002: 33, Yemane 2007: 68). In condition where the population of the country is increasing and requires solutions the continuation of pastoralism occupying large area of land is disputed.

Third, PFE's claim that pastoralism is an efficient mode of life to access 'inaccessible resources' is contestable considering the reality that pastoralist's experience repeated history of drought and conflict. Two points can be noted here: the very reality of repeated history of drought and conflict reveals the fact that the mode of life is not efficient enough from protecting it from crises. In addition, the welfare of the people living under such repeated circumstances also matters. If PFE aims to address the problems of pastoralists and if the people under the system continue to suffer from drought and conflict in such system with increasing frequency, neither 'recognition' nor 'efficiency' could address the lived existence of the people.

And finally not all forms of marginalisation of pastoralism are related to the 'social construction' of their mode of life. Marginalization also exists with in the mode of life based of presumed differences in social identity (based on gender and clan explained in section 3.2). The heterogeneity of pastoralists however is unaccounted in PFE discourse of pastoralists' vulnerability. The lack of understanding of heterogeneity of experiences is also reflected in its homogenised recommendation, the recognition agenda. The differences in experiencing vulnerability among the sub-groups might shape the way they understand psatorialism and its prospect. Devereux's work among Somali pastoralists indicates the gendered preference towards sedentarization where most of the women interviewed found to have a positive view towards sedentarization for it is 'more comfortable, less risky (no starvation, better recognition and support), less hard work, better public services, and better future for their children' compared to the mobile mode of life (2006: 164-167).

Another simple example could be to assume a pregnant Somali pastoralist woman who undergoes FGM (infibulation) and about to deliver in extreme hot weather under no health service provisions. One can understand the difficulty

posed on her due to the mode of life that deprives her to get health services. The question here is can recognition of mobility based pastoralist mode of life be a choice for someone whose life chance hangs on a service provided in a fixed location?

In conclusion, the effort PFE is making towards addressing pastoralists' vulnerability is appreciable. But, other factors that equally play a role (their geographical distribution along areas with deteriorated natural capital, the climate change that manifested in the form of increased environmental temperature and disruption of rainfall, and social order within the mode of life) are not well addressed in its recognition agenda. Besides, its overemphasis on the positive aspect of the pastoralist social order, I argue, blinds it from considering the lived experience and existence of people under the mode of life. The implication of the recognition agenda for sub-groups (women and minority clans) – with regard to the reinforcement of, or challenge to, existing discriminatory social practices needs to be cross-examined.

**A concluding remark:**

This chapter offered a perspective on how particular interests drove the two discourses by the government and PFE. The two perspectives have competing epistemological stances. The government epistemology is rooted in foundationalist/ positivist principle led by deductive reasoning. Its approach is technocratic and paternalistic in the sense that it tends to rely on state-centred logic in explaining the causes and dimensions of pastoralist vulnerability. PFE, on the other hand is grounded in post-structuralist / anti-foundationalist school of thoughts. It associates pastoralist vulnerability with the social construction, or the myth, that placed pastoralism outside mainstream development and brought about its marginalisation. Though the epistemological stance between government and PFE is polarised, the differences become blurred when government recognises structurally excluded marginal voices through setting up institutions and include them in policy documents, whereas PFE start embracing a modernist and integrationist approach through producing policy document, adopting a right-based approach and mainstreaming gender.

The politicisation of the claims made by both parties seems to be driven by their own political interests and goals. Accordingly their interpretation of pastoralist vulnerability neither understands the complexity and dynamics of pastoralist vulnerability, nor does it recognize the experience of women and minority clans whose voices remain unheard. Recent efforts to understand the gender dynamics in pastoralism led to the preparation of the document ‘gender mainstreaming in pastoral programs’ (though it is still in the draft phase). The clan dynamics however remains invisible. These could be an area for further consideration and research.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

My paper tells a story, a story about a group of people, namely pastoralists, estimated nearly 10 million living in Ethiopia. They lived under repeated history of drought and conflict. Different explanations have been given about their vulnerability to drought and conflict. Two perspectives came out bold- the one held by the government and the other by PFE: where government associates pastoralists' vulnerability with their mobility, PFE relates their vulnerability with their marginalization from the mainstream development. Their prescribed solutions also differ – the government recommends sedentarization while PFE advocates for the recognition of pastoralism as a viable mode of life. Both discourses display a mono perspective which fails to recognize the multi-dimensional and complex features of a convergence of different processes (ecological, economic and socio-political). The divergence in their understanding and prescribing solution to pastoral vulnerability stems from the epistemological view that they are informed by: the government grounds in foundationalist principle whereas PFE in anti-foundationalist. Their epistemological stances however become inconsistent when it comes to action.

The people who are suffering from increasing frequency of conflict and drought are in between. I argued with observations in the field that we cannot fully understand pastoralists' vulnerability unless we examine the interplay between social, political, economic and environmental dynamics outside and inside the mode of life. Neither the diagnoses nor the prescribed solution held by the government and PFE display an understanding of this interactions.

The paper demonstrated that vulnerability of pastoralists (as heterogeneous group) and pastoralism (the mode of life) to drought and conflict is due to the convergence between phenomenon (climate change), spatial location (geographic distribution along the borders of the country with a land of low productive potential), and social orders (social relations of power between pastoralist and non-pastoralists, and within pastoralists based on gender and clan relations).

The repeated occurrences of drought without giving pastoralists time to recover from previous experience deteriorate their adaptive capacity, resilience, and coping strategies. Experience of the marginalized subgroups among the pastoralist population (women and minorities) are intensified by local structures and practices of discrimination that deny them access to and control over resources. Yet the experiences of these subgroups have been overlooked, mis-specified or misrepresented by policy makers and development practitioners, therefore still remains in the shadow of their discourses and prescriptions. Recent efforts by some NGOs and PFE took up gender issues. But the clan dynamics remains still invisible to their eyes. These further blind them from taking into account or at least from investigating the implications their politics might bring to these subgroups.

I conclude my paper by quoting Hodgson. Her paper about the persistence of problems of pastoralists in East Africa argues ‘the problem is with the formulation of the problem itself, especially the images of pastoralists that shape how scholars, policy-makers, and development practitioners understand the problem of pastoralists, and then design and implement development interventions to solve them’ (Hodgson 1999: 221). I also argued in this paper that the persistent vulnerability of pastoralists in Ethiopia is due to the lack of appropriate response that emanate from appropriate problem analysis. The government associates pastoralists vulnerability with mobility while PFE with marginalisation. While the articulation by both parties could be true considering their justification, their selective articulation only ‘tells part of the story’ and is never a solution for vulnerability of pastoralists and pastoralism.

Instead, I am arguing in this paper is that understanding the dynamics between political, economic, social, and environmental domains offers the ‘missing link’ that will help to construct in Crenshaw’s word ‘group politics’ as opposed to single group’s interest in which differences between government and PFE can be dissolved.

I end my story here. It is now up to policy makers to understand the complexity, negotiate over meanings and implications, and design

comprehensive approaches that address pastoralists' vulnerability in its multi dimensionality and context specificity.



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# Annexs

## Annex 1. Guiding Questions for Interviews with Organisations of Pastoralist Concern

1. Profile of the organisations
  - ◆ Status (government/ NGO)
  - ◆ Responsibility and Target
  - ◆ Mission and vision
2. How do you see 'pastoral vulnerability'? What are the different dimensions? (Drought, conflict, lack of basic services, others)
3. What factors do you think caused pastoral vulnerability, and How? (Ecological, political, social, economical, any others)
4. Do men and women experience vulnerability differently? If yes, why and how? How do you explain gendered experience of 'pastoral vulnerability' along the different dimensions of pastoral vulnerability?
5. What remedy is being underway by your organisation to address pastoralists vulnerability?
6. How do you see the commitment of the government in addressing the needs and priorities of pastoralists (institutional arrangement and budgetary commitment, responding to the needs and priorities of pastoralists)?
7. Do you think there is an understanding gap in *defining and addressing* pastoral vulnerability among the NGOs and Government? If Yes, How and Why?
8. Do you think the gap in defining and/or addressing contributes to the *lack of appropriate response* and *continual vulnerability* of the pastoralists?
9. What measures do you think should be taken in order to reconcile the discrepancy between organisations advocating for pastoralist right (recognition) and government's response (action and priority) (sedentarization)?
10. For PFE – To what extent PFE shape government's perception of pastoral *vulnerability and gender*, policy and action?

## **Annex 2. Guiding questions for in-depth interview and questionnaire (For Shinile pastoralist households)**

**Household composition:** 10 pastoralist households was selected (male and female separately)

- ◆ Polygamous
- ◆ Monogamous
- ◆ Female headed Households (widowed and divorcee)

### **Guiding Questions and data table for the In-depth interview with Agro-pastoral Households:**

1. What do think are the causes for drought (ecological, marginalisation, human interventions)?
2. What impacts does it have on your lives?
3. What do you say about the frequency of drought in the past 10-15 years (increasing/decreasing)? If increasing/decreasing – what do you think are the reasons behind?
4. What is special about this year's drought? (Food crises<sup>26</sup>, others...)
5. Do you think that your vulnerability to drought is due to the pastoralism mode of life?
6. How do you see government's and NGO's intervention in supporting your livelihood?
7. How are you coping with your vulnerabilities (drought, lack of access to education and lack of participation)?
8. Do you participate in local political structures (Kebele, Woreda, and Zonal level)?( who participates, who decides)
9. What actions have you taken so far to raise your concern and problems? Have you been organised in groups and tried to raise and address your concern? If yes, what was the response?
10. How do you see the public services Available online the Woreda (health and education)? Are you satisfied with the services you are getting from them? If not, why? Who is more vulnerable as a result?
11. How does the division of labour looks like at the household level? Who does what (men, women and children (boys and girls)?
12. Who do you think is taking up most of the house hold burden (men/women/ children)?
13. What about ownership of assets (cattle, sheep, goat, camel and land)? Who owns them? Who decides on when to sell it? Who is benefited from livestock marketing? (HH decision making)
14. Who participates most in community organisations (Edir, Ekub, wedding, funerals...) (men and women)? Is there difference in the level of participation? (community decision making)

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<sup>26</sup> Food crises were incorporated in the questions after the first respondent explain its grim convergence with the 2007/08 drought in the area.

**Annex 3. Data table for summarising gender relations within the pastoralist community**

**Table 1. Activity Profile- Who Does What?**

<b>S.no</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Estimated time spent for the activity</b>	<b>Remark</b>
1.	Who brings up the children?					
2.	Who cooks food?					
3.	Who fetches water?					How far is it.....
4.	Who looks after the family?					
5.	Who herds the livestock /camel, goats, oxen...etc. /?					
6.	Who milk the cattle?					
7.	Who collects fire wood?					How far is it...
8.	Who builds house/shelter ?					
9.	Who is involved in livestock marketing?					
10.	Who did income generation activity apart from livestock and crop production?					
11.	Who participate in community related services?					Is there a difference in participation?
12.	Who leads community organizations?					



13.	Who is engaged in marketing of livestock, firewood, charcoal, building materials /woods/ etc.?					
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**Table 2. Access and Control Profile – Who has What?**

<b>S.no</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Estimated time spent for the activity</b>	<b>Remark</b>
1.	Who owns the land?					
2.	Who has access to use the land?					
3.	Who owns the house/shelter?					
4.	Who owns the livestock? Who have control over the livestock?					
5.	Who have control over money, banking, saving...?					
6.	Who decide on what to buy, sell, what to produce, and when to produce?					
7.	Who decide on fertility matters (When to have a child)?					
<b>S.no.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Remark</b>		
1.	Is there access for transportation, market?					
2.	Is there proper infrastructure (education, health centres, and transportation?)					

**4. Socioeconomic and socio-cultural context**

1. Is the living environment safe for girls and women?

**YES/ NO**

2. Are there gender specific risks and vulnerabilities?

**YES/ NO**

(1) If yes, which sex is more vulnerable and why? What are the gender specific vulnerabilities?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. Are there Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) in the area?

**YES/ NO**

(1) If Yes,

i.What are the major HTP's prevailing in the area?

- a. Female Genital Mutilation
- b. Marriage by abduction
- c. Early Marriage
- d. Uvula -cutting and Tonsil-scrapping
- e. Body alteration
- f. Food and work taboo
- g. Others, please specify

.....  
.....

ii.Who are mostly the victims of these practices? **MALE/ FEMALE /CHILDREN**

iii.Why is it done?

- a. Religious reason
- b. Cultural reason
- c. Others, Please specify

.....  
.....

4. Is there discrimination in access to health services, education, and allocation of resources for boys and girls?

**YES/ NO**

(1) If yes, why is it done?

- a. Religious reason
- b. Cultural reason
- c. Others, Please specify

.....

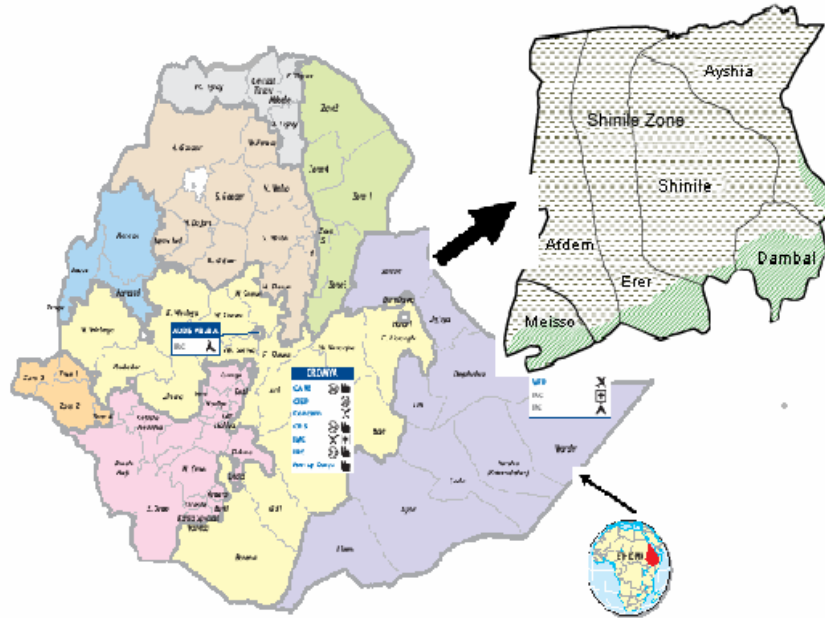
5. For what purpose will the money from livestock marketing serve?

- (1) Family consumption
- (2) Saving
- (3) Buying weapons
- (4) Others, please specify

ify.....  
.....

6. Can women decide and do things without the permission of their husbands? **YES/ NO**  
 (1) If no, why?  
 .....  
 .....
7. Are polygamy /multiple marriages permitted?  
**YES/ NO**  
 (a)How many wives a man can have? What impact does it have on family responsibility?  
 .....
8. Does the tradition/culture encourage men and women to equally participate in decision making process?  
**YES/ NO**  
 (1) If NO, Why?  
 .....
9. Do women engage in income generation activities?  
**YES/ NO**  
 (1) For what purpose will the money be invested?  
 .....
10. Do male and female students equally sent to school?  
**YES/ NO**  
 If **NO**, why? .....
11. Average age at marriage: Male  Female   
 (1) Is maternal mortality high in the area? **YES/ NO**   
 If **YES**, What is the reason?  
 1. Birth complication  
 2. Poor nutrition  
 3. Early marriage  
 4. lack of health service  
 Others, please specify  
 .....  
 .....
12. Number of children per family: ..... Male  Female
13. Is there a difference between male headed and female headed households in terms of access to and control over resources? Explain

Map 2. Shinile Zone and Woreda



Source: <http://www.dpcc.gov.et/Livelihoods/Somali/Pages/ShinilePastoral.htm>;  
[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps\\_Af.nsf/luFullMap/C146498FBFA4C058852573A30083B688/\\$File/usaidd\\_PRG\\_eth071130.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Af.nsf/luFullMap/C146498FBFA4C058852573A30083B688/$File/usaidd_PRG_eth071130.pdf?OpenElement), Date accessed 25 June 2008(copied and modified)